

Fluids advice

- Having a low fluid intake makes your urine more concentrated and this irritates the bladder, making urgency more likely.
- Aim to drink 8 glasses of fluid a day (3-4 pints). Water is the best drink
- Caffeine will irritate the bladder so try to cut down your coffee, tea, chocolate and cola intake. Some green tea also contains caffeine. Replace caffeinated drinks with:
 - Decaffeinated coffee or tea
 - Herbal teas/deaf green tea
 - Hot water
 - Cranberry juice (if you take Warfarin, please check with your doctor before drinking cranberry juice)

Remember

FREQUENCY OF BLADDER EMPTYING

Avoid emptying your bladder too often as this can reduce its working capacity. You should not need to go more often than every two hours, and don't wait much longer than four hours.

Try to empty your bladder completely, but do not strain. Sit down properly and do not "hover". Relax – this will help your bladder to empty properly. It may help to lean forwards, rock gently or stand up and sit down again once you think you have finished to allow complete emptying.

Contact

Central Booking Tel No: 01603 216021

You can receive help with queries about NHS services from our
Patient Advice and Liaison Service

Telephone: **0800 088 4449**
Email: pals@nchc.nhs.uk



If you would like this leaflet in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact **0800 088 4449**

Leaflet produced: Jul 2020
Leaflet review date: Jul 2022



Norfolk Community
Health and Care
NHS Trust

Urgency and frequency

Advice for patients

LOOKING AFTER YOU LOCALLY

What do “urgency” and “frequency” mean?

Urgency is the symptom of having to hurry to pass urine.

Frequency is the need to pass urine more often than approximately every two hours.

You may have one or both of these symptoms.

Urgency and/or frequency can be made worse by the following:

- Not drinking enough – this can also cause constipation
- Anxiety
- Infection
- Caffeine
- Fizzy drinks
- Alcohol
- Going to the toilet “just in case”
- Being overweight – this puts stress on your pelvic floor muscles
- Weak pelvic floor muscles

If you have been given water tablets you must still take them, even if they make you want to go more often. Discuss this with your continence nurse or physiotherapist.

What can I do if this happens?

Bladder retraining is a technique to help the bladder to hold more urine, so that you feel the need to go to the toilet less often.

Using a bladder diary can help – write down the times when you need to go to the toilet and do this for a few days. It should help you to see if there are times when you can wait for longer, and times when you go more often, sometimes because it has become a habit.

Gradually try to increase the time between going to the toilet, starting with waiting just a few minutes. This is likely to be difficult at first, but will gradually become easier over a few weeks, as your bladder gets used to holding larger amounts.

Pelvic Floor Muscle Exercises

The pelvic floor muscles work to stop leakage of urine from the bladder and faeces from the bowel. When you pass water, or open your bowels, the muscles relax. Afterwards, they tighten again to restore control. They can become weak because of childbirth, lack of exercise, menopause or just getting older.

Doing the pelvic floor muscle exercises taught to you by your health professional will help the muscles to work better, helping you to control your bladder and allowing it to hold larger amounts.

Tips to help retrain your bladder

If you get a sudden need to pass urine, or to help you to wait before going, it should help if you try the following:

- First breathe out and then breathe normally
- Stand still or sit down – it makes it much easier to control the urge
- Cross your legs
- Press on your pelvic floor
- Lift up your pelvic floor muscles
- Let your stomach relax
- Think about something else
- The urge should pass in 10-15 seconds
- Walk to the toilet if you still need to go
- Try to delay going to the toilet a little longer each time

Trying these techniques at home, to begin with, is easier than when you are out. As you learn to use them, you should be able to control the urgency more easily.

Do not try to hold on at night – it will only keep you awake. Practising holding on in the daytime will gradually help with night-time problems.